



# 2023-2024 MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

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## Cheerleading Rules, Policies, and Bylaws

### General Information

See [General Section](#) of the Athletic Rules and Policies Manual for information regarding the following:

- Athletic Director's Checklist
- Coaches Responsibility: Student Eligibility Checklist
- Official Cheer Team Size
- Physical Examinations and Parent Permit
- Weather Conditions (heat, cold, lightning & air quality)

### RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPECTATOR CONDUCT

In order to elevate standards of sportsmanship and encourage the growth of responsible citizenship among the students, member schools, fans and school personnel, the MSHSL held a Sportsmanship Summit and asked student participants to identify behavior expectations they felt should be in place at every school event.

These minimum behavior expectations provide a foundation upon which member schools, conferences, administrative regions and the League's Board of Directors can build specific guidelines for activities under their control.

MSHSL [Bylaw 409](#), RESPONSIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATING TEAMS, STUDENTS AND SPECTATORS, speaks to this issue, directly, and Bylaw 409-2 specifically states that, "School officials shall be held responsible for the proper conduct of teams, team members, students and home spectators regardless of where the contest is being held."

In all MSHSL activities, each participating school shall designate a person or persons from that school to serve as crowd control supervisors or chaperones. MSHSL tournament staff may require school administrators to contact the tournament manager prior to the start of the tournament game so that they can be immediately contacted to respond to behavioral issues regarding their team members, students and/or spectators at the tournament site. Each supervisor or chaperone should be immediately identifiable to the students and to the tournament site ushers and other security personnel. This will help to coordinate crowd control between school supervisors and tournament site personnel. 8/9/2005

## **MSHSL MINIMAL BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS FOR REGULAR AND POST-SEASON TOURNAMENT COMPETITIONS**

- Respect the American flag and the National Anthem.
- Spectators must wear clothing that covers the entire torso. Those who do not comply or who wear clothing that is vulgar, obscene or that in some other way inappropriate, as determined by school/tournament personnel, will be removed from the arena/stadium if they do not cooperate with this behavior expectation.
- The use of appropriate language is expected at all times. Profanity, negative chants, booing, trash talk, name calling, personal attacks or other acts of disrespect are unacceptable and must be immediately addressed by school and/or tournament administrators.
- Respect the game/contest. Under no condition shall anyone other than the members of the official squad enter the playing surface. No one may interfere with the contest in any way.
- Hand-held signs, which do not obstruct the view of others, will be permitted provided they are in good taste. Signs, message boards, “white” boards or other similar items contest/tournament officials deem to be in poor taste will be removed.
- Artificial noise makers (i.e. megaphones, cowbells, sirens, whistles, thunder sticks, and other similar items) are not allowed.
- Laser lights are strictly prohibited.

**THANK YOU** for supporting your student athletes and fine arts participants and for providing a positive environment in which educational activities are conducted.

## **Cheerleading Information – Regular Season**

### **STATUS AS A LEAGUE-SPONSORED ACTIVITY**

Refer to [Bylaw 401](#). Cheerleaders will be required to qualify under the following eligibility bylaws: Age, 101; Credit Requirements, 103; Enrollment, 104; Physical Examination, 107; Seasons, 109; Semesters Enrolled, 110 and Chemical Eligibility, 205.

**Refer to [Bylaw 401](#) and [Bylaw 412](#).** As a League-sponsored activity, cheerleaders serve as a support group for the interscholastic athletic program sponsored by MSHSL member schools. Each cheer team should strive to boost school spirit, promote good sportsmanship, develop positive crowd involvement and help student participants and spectators achieve the educational objectives of the interscholastic athletic program. Cheerleading should focus on leading or directing the cheering of student and adult fans. In this role, cheerleaders are positive, effective student leaders. Their activities should be focused on: creating a cooperative spirit among the cheer team's, athletes, student bodies, school administrators and the community; recognizing outstanding plays and examples of good sportsmanship on the part of competing teams; and aiding the school and game officials in the promotion of good sportsmanship and in the administration of the athletic contest.

## **OFFICIAL CHEERLEADING RULES BOOK**

Refer to [Bylaw 402](#). The National Federation Spirit Rule Book should be ordered through the League office and made available to each head cheer coach.

### **LENGTH OF SEASON:**

Sideline cheerleading is a non-competitive activity that does not have an official season start or end date. Member schools determine the official start date and length of season for sideline cheerleading in their school community.

### **GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- A. Cheer programs should be placed under the direction of a qualified and knowledgeable coach.
- B. All cheerleaders should receive proper training before attempting any form cheerleading skills (tumbling, stunts, pyramids and jumps).
- C. Practice sessions should be supervised by the coach and held in a location suitable for the activities of cheerleaders, i.e., availability of tumbling mats; space without interference with other activities, etc.
- D. All cheer teams should adopt a professionally developed comprehensive conditioning program.
- E. A structured stretching exercise and flexibility routine should precede and follow all practice sessions and precede all pre-game activities.
- F. Pyramid, stunts and tumbling should be practiced or performed only on appropriate surfaces. Concrete, wet, icy or uneven surfaces are not acceptable.
- G. The coach should be qualified to recognize a squad's ability level and provide training and skill development accordingly. Individuals should be fully informed of any risks involved in the skills of cheerleading. They should not be encouraged to participate in any skill beyond their comfort.

### **GENDER EQUITY**

Cheerleading is sponsored as a non-competitive athletic activity by the Minnesota State High School League. Title IX of the Education Amendment of 1972 defines cheerleading as a support activity which must be open to members of both sexes. Each MSHSL member school will determine if, how and when cheer competition will be sponsored by the school, and under state and federal equity laws and rules, its competitive status within the athletic program.

### **CHEERLEADING MANUAL**

A MSHSL Cheerleading Manual for Coaches is available on the Coaches Dashboard on the MSHSL website for your reference.

## COACHES OF CHEERLEADING PROGRAMS

Cheer coaches in Minnesota are NOT required to meet MN State Statute 122A.33. Every Head Cheerleading Coach must complete the Continuing Education Requirement (CER) and annual Rules Interpretation Meeting that can be found on the League's website through their Coaches Dashboard page.

In addition, all head cheerleading coaches who wish to have their sideline cheerleaders stunt are required to complete the NFHS Online Cheer and Dance Safety Certification Course. (Formerly ACCAA and Stunt Progression 1). If you have never taken the ACCAA safety and in person Stunt Progression 1 course, you must complete the new combined Cheer and Dance Safety Certification course at NFHSLearn.com prior to allowing your athletes to stunt. Coaches who have previously completed AACCA and Stunt Progression 1: if you have previously completed these two courses, you will have one calendar year to complete the new Cheer and Dance Safety Certification Course at NFHSLearn.com. This course is required of Head Cheer Coaches and must be renewed once every four years.

## Cheerleading Information – Post Season

### TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR CHEER TEAMS AT STATE TOURNAMENTS

- A. All cheerleaders must be accompanied by a coach.
  
- B. The number of cheerleaders admitted through the pass gate and permitted on the competitive surface:
  1. **Soccer:** All who were regularly rostered to varsity soccer cheer team during the season, plus one mascot, one coach.
  2. **Football:** All who were regularly rostered to varsity football cheer team during the season, plus one mascot, one coach.
  3. **Volleyball, Girls:** All who were regularly rostered to varsity girls volleyball cheer team during the season plus one mascot and one coach. A maximum of six cheerleaders on the court plus one mascot.
  4. **Hockey** All who were regularly rostered to varsity hockey cheer team during the season, plus one mascot and one coach. A maximum of six cheerleaders on the ice plus one mascot.
  5. **Basketball** All who were regularly rostered to varsity basketball cheer team during the season, plus one mascot and one coach. A maximum of 12 cheerleaders on the floor plus one mascot.
  6. **Wrestling:** Team Tournament - A maximum of six cheerleaders will be allowed into the event plus one mascot. Cheerleaders will not be allowed at mat side.
  
- C. Cheerleaders and mascots of state tournament cheer teams must be 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students below 7<sup>th</sup> grade may not be mascots and may not participate with the squad.